

# **EXHIBIT 67**

## How Jim Jordan, a Fighter Aligned With Trump, Wrestled His Way to Power

The Ohio Republican defines himself by his penchant for punching back, whether against allegations that he was derelict in a sex abuse scandal or attempts to prosecute the former president.



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Published April 16, 2023 Updated April 17, 2023, 11:04 a.m. ET

10 MIN READ

WASHINGTON — When Representative Jim Jordan made his appeal to donors at a recent fund-raiser for the hard-right House Freedom Caucus, he pointed to his clash with Alvin L. Bragg, the Manhattan prosecutor who has criminally charged former President Donald J. Trump, as the kind of pursuit their money was helping support.

“The district attorney in Manhattan used federal funds to indict the former president for no crime, and then when we start our investigation, they take us to court,” Mr. Jordan, the chairman of the powerful Judiciary Committee, told the donors at a private event in Tennessee last week, according to audio of the event obtained by The New York Times. “That’s how crazy it’s gotten. So we say thank you for the hard-earned money.”

It was the latest example of how Mr. Jordan, the right-wing Ohio Republican, has propelled his rise in Congress, where he has made a name for himself with bare-knuckled partisan tactics and a penchant for picking fights with his adversaries, then used his higher profile to raise campaign funds and amass power.

When a sexual abuse scandal at Ohio State University threatened to derail his political career, Mr. Jordan punched back in characteristic fashion, details of which have not been previously reported, calling a wrestler’s aging parents and asking them to persuade their son to back off the charge that Mr. Jordan knew about the abuse and did nothing, according to interviews conducted for this article.



Mr. Jordan likes to refer to himself as “just a country boy.” Maddie McGarvey for The New York Times

When a Republican speaker, John A. Boehner of Ohio, wasn’t conservative enough for his liking, Mr. Jordan, who co-founded the Freedom Caucus, led the band of hard-right lawmakers who pressured him to resign. Mr. Boehner referred to Mr. Jordan as a legislative and political “terrorist.”

"I didn't try to be a thorn in the side," Mr. Jordan said in an interview. "I just tried to go do what we told the voters we were going to do. It seemed like that wasn't happening as it should have with the previous Republican leaders."

When Mr. Trump needed a band of loyal foot soldiers to question and undermine faith in the 2020 election results, Mr. Jordan led the charge in Congress in the weeks leading up to the Jan. 6, 2021 mob attack on the Capitol.

Now Mr. Jordan, 59, is using his perch on the judiciary panel to defend his most important political patron, Mr. Trump, and to attack his adversaries, including the Biden administration, Democrats and Mr. Bragg, who has brought 34 criminal charges against the former president.

On Monday, Mr. Jordan will convene his panel in New York to battle Mr. Bragg on his own turf, in a hearing that aims to spotlight crime in the city on his watch. Mr. Jordan has accused Mr. Bragg of advancing "radical pro-crime, anti-victim policies" while pursuing a case against Mr. Trump that he claims constitutes "interference" in the 2024 presidential race. It is the sort of theatrical maneuver for which Mr. Jordan, who almost always eschews a suit jacket and speaks in a rapid, auctioneer-like cadence, has come to be known.

Over eight terms in the House, Mr. Jordan, who served for a decade in Ohio's Statehouse before winning election to Congress, has not been the lead sponsor of a single bill that became law, earning him a perennial ranking from the Center for Effective Lawmaking as among the least effective members of Congress. (Mr. Jordan's aides argue he influences bills in committee without putting his name on them.)



Listening to Mr. Jordan speak in Mansfield, Ohio, in February. Maddie McGarvey for The New York Times

Mr. Jordan is also the chairman of a powerful new subcommittee created at the insistence of right-wing Republicans to scrutinize what they call the "weaponization" of government against conservatives, which has yet to produce any new bombshell revelations. That is despite weeks of investigation, a budget of nearly \$20 million and scores of staff aides working to uncover wrongdoing.

But he measures success in other ways. No single member of Congress has done more to push House Republicans to the right, forcing more mainstream and establishment figures in the party to cede ground to the archconservative wing.

He has reserved his most ruthless tactics for Democrats, fighting them at every turn as they pursued investigations of Mr. Trump. These days, his hearings include a level of partisanship and hostility that is notable even by today's hyper-polarized standards.

At the weaponization subcommittee's last session, Delegate Stacey Plaskett of the Virgin Islands, the top Democrat, rose from her seat and threw a piece of paper back at a Republican who had handed it to her to prove a point.

Ms. Plaskett later said Mr. Jordan's approach had created a "melodramatic, grievance-riddled, wannabe-daytime-drama" atmosphere.



Those same tactics have earned him hero status among rank-and-file members of the House G.O.P., particularly those on the far right, many of whom speak of Mr. Jordan with reverence.

“He’s probably one of the most universally respected members,” said Representative Mike Johnson, the Republican of Louisiana whom Mr. Jordan supported in his run for Congress and who became an architect of the Electoral College objections. “He can appeal to all members of the conference, but particularly the most conservative among us.”

Representative Elise Stefanik of New York, the No. 3 Republican who has shifted to the right in recent years, becoming a Trump loyalist, called Mr. Jordan a mentor.



The founding chairman of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus, Mr. Jordan has helped push the House to the right. Maddie McGarvey for The New York Times

“Jim helped me build my confidence,” Ms. Stefanik said.

Mr. Jordan has used his cachet with the hard right to build his own influence. During Speaker Kevin McCarthy’s prolonged battle in January to entice far-right lawmakers to support him, Mr. McCarthy agreed to a number of demands that further empowered Mr. Jordan, including promising to form the weaponization panel and give it heightened powers and the same amount of funding as the select committee that investigated the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol.

Mr. Jordan has a budget of \$19 million, a significant increase from the \$7.6 million Democrats spent last year on the Judiciary Committee, and is pursuing 237 witnesses, 88 of whom work in the government, according to documents reviewed by The New York Times. He expanded his committee staff to more than 60 members from about 20 in recent weeks, including hiring at least two former F.B.I. agents whom Mr. Jordan believes will provide a road map for how to investigate the agency.

He has quietly sent out 163 letters and issued 22 subpoenas, many of which have not been announced but were obtained by The Times. Among those receiving the records demands are technology companies, nonprofit groups and university-affiliated researchers.

The committee has obtained nearly 115,000 pages of documents.

The goal, Mr. Jordan says, is to put so many “facts on the table” that the need to pass legislation to overhaul the Justice Department and the F.B.I. will become overwhelmingly apparent. And if the agencies don’t change, Mr. Jordan says, it will be time to consider cutting funding for federal law enforcement agencies.

Any Republican-led impeachment would also run through Mr. Jordan’s committee. Asked whether Republicans should seek to try President Biden for high crimes, Mr. Jordan demurred, saying, “That’s a question for the entire conference.”

But Mr. Jordan has also acknowledged there is another goal at work, telling a conservative audience last year the investigations would “help frame up the 2024 race” in a way that benefits Mr. Trump.

Some on the right who had initially been concerned that Mr. Jordan was not producing any fresh revelations say his confrontation with Mr. Bragg has changed their minds.

“Jim Jordan got off to a slow, bumpy start, but he is now firing on all cylinders,” said Mike Davis, a former top Republican staff member on the Senate Judiciary Committee and the founder of the conservative Article III Project. He praised Mr. Jordan’s effort to go after Mr. Bragg as “critical and very effective.”

Mr. Jordan attributes his competitiveness to his father — Mr. Jordan’s hero — who coached the Little League Baseball and wrestling teams and instilled in his son a love of conservative values. Mr. Jordan threw himself into the sport of wrestling with a single-minded focus, posting a high school record of 150-1. He still remembers his lone loss vividly, and he says it continues to eat at him.

Competing for the University of Wisconsin, he won two N.C.A.A. wrestling titles, including one over John Smith, arguably America’s greatest wrestler. Mr. Jordan says he applies the lessons he learned from wrestling to his current role.

He practices for all his public hearings, going over talking points again and again, as he used to drill wrestling moves, so he can deploy them quickly and to maximum effect.

“I look at it like a wrestling match,” Mr. Jordan says. “I’m going to try to get as ready as I can. You can’t just wing it.”



“I didn’t try to be a thorn in the side,” Mr. Jordan said of his time in Congress. “I just tried to go do what we told the voters we were going to do.” Maddie McGarvey for The New York Times

It is that fighting instinct that Mr. Jordan most values in Mr. Trump. Traveling through his deep-red district recently, he was asked by Republican supporters whether Mr. Trump was still electable or if it was time to move away from Mr. Trump and get behind a different presidential candidate for 2024. Each time, he said to stick by the former president.

“I’m 100 percent for President Trump,” Mr. Jordan told one local businessman at a gathering in his office in Mansfield, Ohio. “I just like the way he fights.”



An early and exceedingly loyal devotee to the former president, Mr. Jordan has capitalized on Mr. Trump's backing to acquire considerable power. After Mr. Jordan unsuccessfully challenged Mr. McCarthy in 2018 for the position of minority leader, Mr. Trump privately intervened and persuaded Mr. McCarthy to give Mr. Jordan a top committee post.

Mr. Jordan was working out at the House gym when he got the call from Mr. McCarthy offering him the ranking Republican spot on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, forming a mutually beneficial partnership that has held to this day.

Former Representative Mick Mulvaney, who was a House Freedom Caucus member with Mr. Jordan before becoming Mr. Trump's budget director, said Mr. Jordan's rise is a reflection of how Republicans have shifted to the right.

"The party is now more interested in the things that Jim has been interested in from the very beginning," Mr. Mulvaney said. "The party has sort of come to him."

Mr. Jordan credits the former president.

"Because of President Trump, we are now a populist party, rooted in conservative principles, which is frankly where we always should have been," he said.

Mr. Jordan likes to refer to himself as "just a country boy," and unlike many members of Congress, his financial disclosure forms show he is not particularly wealthy. His income comes mostly from his \$174,000 congressional salary, and he and his wife, Polly, live in a house built in 1837 on eight acres where Mr. Jordan does the mowing and the yard work.

But his close ties with Mr. Trump propelled Mr. Jordan to superstar status among conservative media outlets, including Fox News, and his political operation has reaped the financial benefits, recording a 20-fold increase in fund-raising. In 2016, Mr. Jordan's campaign brought in about \$732,000; during the last election cycle, it took in \$14 million.



"I'm 100 percent for President Trump," Mr. Jordan said. "I just like the way he fights." Al Drago for The New York Times

Still, the abuse scandal that came to light in 2018, concerning Mr. Jordan's time as a young assistant coach at Ohio State University, threatened to sink his career.

Five former wrestlers, including Mark Coleman, a former U.F.C. champion, said Mr. Jordan was aware of the abuse by a team doctor, Richard Strauss, who was accused of abusing 177 male student athletes over two decades, but did nothing to stop it, an allegation Mr. Jordan has consistently denied.

A conservative public relations firm aligned with Mr. Jordan pushed back, circulating statements of support defending Mr. Jordan and claiming that the accusers were "seeing dollar signs."



Mr. Coleman soon walked back his statement and released a second one saying he had merely been referring to how widely known Dr. Strauss's predatory behavior had been around the university. He clarified that he had no knowledge of anyone reporting a specific abuse claim to Mr. Jordan.

In an interview, Mr. Coleman said he stood by both statements but had made the second only after Mr. Jordan spoke by phone with Mr. Coleman's aging parents in an effort to get him to change his story. A lawyer who worked on Mr. Jordan's behalf during the scandal did not dispute the account but said the conversation happened after the parents approached the congressman at an event and expressed a desire to clarify what their son had said.

Mr. Coleman said allies of Mr. Jordan also reached out to him directly, including a lawyer who helped prepare his second statement.

In the interview, Mr. Coleman said Dr. Strauss routinely took 45-minute showers to ogle the athletes, including Mr. Jordan.

"Jim got stared at; I got stared at. Unless he has Alzheimer's, Jim Jordan knew," Mr. Coleman said. "But I have no knowledge of anyone being abused reporting it to Jim Jordan, and I have no problem with Jim Jordan. He was a fantastic coach. He's a good man — a good, churchgoing family man."

At the height of the scandal, Mr. Trump defended Mr. Jordan.

"I don't believe them at all; I believe him," Mr. Trump said then. "Jim Jordan is one of the most outstanding people I've met since I've been in Washington."

As he has risen in the G.O.P., Mr. Jordan has repeatedly proved himself to Mr. Trump.



Mr. Jordan practices for all his public hearings, going over talking points that he will be able to deploy quickly. Haiyun Jiang/The New York Times

During the darkest weekend for Mr. Trump's 2016 campaign, after he was caught on tape boasting about grabbing women, Mr. Jordan and his wife, Polly, publicly doubled down on the Trump candidacy. As other Republicans rushed to distance themselves, Mrs. Jordan flew to North Carolina to join a Women For Trump bus tour.

Mr. Jordan was also there for Mr. Trump after he lost the 2020 election and began searching for ways to cling to power. The Ohio Republican helped devise a communications strategy to undermine public confidence in the election results and became a key planner of the congressional objections to Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s victory.

On Jan. 5, 2021 a day before rioters stormed the Capitol, Mr. Jordan forwarded to his friend Mark Meadows, then the White House chief of staff, a text message he had received from a former Pentagon inspector general outlining a legal strategy to overturn Mr. Trump's election loss.